

# Dovedale, Thorpe and Tissington

**A visit to two of Derbyshire's prettiest villages is combined with a walk along Dovedale, across fields and along an old railway converted for recreational use.**

## Walk Facts:

Start	Car park on the Tissington Trail (SK 165 502), near Thorpe
Terrain	Good paths and tracks through dales and over fields
Length	Nine miles
Time	3 to 4 hours
Food/Drink	Refreshments in Tissington. Pub near start/finish
Toilets	Thorpe and Tissington

## Route

The start is at the car park on the Tissington Trail (an old railway converted for walkers and cyclists) near Thorpe. To get there, take the A515 Buxton road in Ashbourne and after about a mile turn left (signposted Thorpe). When the road turns sharp left at a pub called the Dog and Partridge, turn right and then immediately right again into a short dead-end lane which has the car park at the end of it.

Turn right from the car park along the trackbed of the old railway. After about 100 yards/metres turn right through a stile into a field, signposted for Thorpe and Dovedale. Walk straight up the field then look for a stile ahead. Pass through this and then another to emerge onto the road opposite a lane. Cross the road and take the lane, which leads to the small village of Thorpe. At the end of the lane turn left and follow the road for a short way until you get to a small car park next to some public toilets. Walk through the car park to enter Thorpe Meadow.

Walk along the track which leads across the meadow to a small old quarry. The dramatic-looking hill to the left is Thorpe Cloud, often climbed by Dovedale walkers. The name sounds romantic, as though the hill has its head in the clouds but the name is really rather more prosaic. The word 'cloud' is simply a corruption of the Celtic word 'clud' which means rock or hill.



When the track ends, strike off left across the meadow, heading to the right of Thorpe Cloud to enter Lin Dale. Walk down the dale, keeping the wall on your left, until you reach the famous stepping-stones in Dovedale. Turn right through the heavily-used stile into the main dale. On sunny days it will be crowded here but you can be comforted by the fact that the majority of the people will venture no more than half a mile further along!

Follow the dale (pictured left) for about two miles. It's a fine stroll (with one climb to Lovers Leap) which passes through the wooded dale with its

clear river. Look out for dippers, white-fronted birds the size of a thrush, bobbing up and down on stones and branches in the river. Eventually you pass along a boardwalk, the cave at the end of which has a spring issuing from it which I have never seen dried up even in the driest of summers. A little later you also pass Ilam Rock, a rock finger on the other side of the river which can be accessed for inspection via a footbridge.

Eventually, just after passing a number of caves called Dove Holes, you reach the entrance to Nabs Dale on the right - signposted Alsop-en-le-Dale. Leave the Dovedale path at this point and enter Nabs Dale. This dale is steep and rough but also delightfully quiet and peaceful, surrounded by high limestone crags. Pause for a few minutes to listen to the birdsong from the woods.

When the exit from the dale is reached, walk up to a finger post then turn right and travel along a track, through an open, broken gate and then take a diagonal left path (to the right of the trees) to a finger post. Cross two stiles to make a left turn into another field (there's yet another finger post to show the way). Walk up this field, keeping the wall on your right this time, to reach Bostern Grange Farm.

Turn right to walk through the farmyard. After passing the buildings look for a stile alongside a gate on the left. Pass through this and walk through the field, with the wall to your right, until another stile takes you into open fields.

You now walk in a generally straight line through several fields, making use of stiles and gateways to get from one to the next. At one point you pass a well-restored limekiln. These structures were used to burn locally-quarried limestone to make quicklime for use on the land and in mortar for building. If you're lucky you may see a hare or two around here.

Eventually you reach an open track which crosses your path. Turn left along it and follow it to a minor road. Cross the road and enter another field. Head diagonally left, following the line indicated by the Tissington finger-post, to the corner of a small wood. Walk first alongside and then past the wood, with the wall always on your left, until you descend into the bottom of a small valley. Cross the stile and turn immediately left to pass through a gate. Walk straight ahead past a wall-end, then turn right. Cross this small field diagonally left to the corner then cross another stile and walk up the large field to a stile which leads you onto the main road.

Cross the road with care and pass through a gate-cum-stile contraption into another field. Follow the path onto the road running along an avenue of lime trees. Turn left along the road and follow it right through the enchanting small village of Tissington until the entrance to the Tissington Trail car park is reached on the right. Go into the car park and follow the trail to the right. There's a refreshment kiosk in the car park.

Follow the trail back to the starting point. This is the old Ashbourne to Buxton railway which has been converted to a walking and cycling trail. There are often many cyclists passing along here so take care - some of them use it as a racetrack! Just before the Thorpe car park is reached you pass through Fenny Bentley cutting, which is managed as a nature reserve and consequently contains a good compliment of plant life.

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